

Note from the Editor-in-Chief

This issue of EASTM contains two articles, a research note and a number of book reviews. The first article, authored by David de Saeger and Erik Weber, revisits the so-called “Needham Question” (‘Why had modern science not developed in Chinese (or Indian) civilization, but only in Europe?’), with a focus on the meaning and justification of causal claims in the history of Chinese science. De Saeger and Weber inquire a) whether it is legitimate to ask for explanations of absences (such as events that did not occur), b) cite absences as explanations, and c) whether the Needham question can be answered, even if asking for explanations of absences and citing absences as explanations are both legitimate. Arguing from the point of view of two types of causation theory, viz. *production theories of causation* and *difference-making theories of causation*, they come to the conclusion that such terms as ‘science’, ‘modern science’ and ‘civilization’ are improper concepts for historical inquiry. Moreover, they argue that with an approach of causation understood as production one cannot explain the Needham question properly. If, however, one applies the concept of causation as difference-making, then no principal reason can be adduced why such questions cannot be asked and answered. In the view of the authors this means that Needham’s question has to be redefined in terms of its constituent sub-questions (e.g. ‘Why did Europe develop controlled experiments, while China did not?’) or, expressed differently, to be interpreted as difference-making in order to serve as a useful tool in comparative history of science.

The second article in this issue deals with the history of salt production in Yunnan province. On the basis of one of the most important documents in Chinese salt history, a scroll entitled “Illustrations on the Salt Production Methods of Yunnan” (*Diannan yanfa tu* 滇南鹽法圖), Zhu Xia undertakes a systematic investigation of historical salt production techniques in Yunnan province. After presenting a short history of the nine salt works depicted and described in the scroll, she then proceeds to present a detailed analysis of the types of brine springs and wells, the hoisting and transportation of brine, and the boiling and forming of salt. The importance of the scroll, which was made by order of the Yunnan Salt Distribution and Postal Service Commissioner Li Bi 李苾 in 1707, lies in its detailed depiction and description of all the major steps in the salt production process, constituting thus in many ways a comprehensive and unique document in Chinese salt history. It is indeed the only historical testimony that gives us such a systematic and quite complete insight

into the characteristics of salt production as it was undertaken by people of different ethnic backgrounds in southwest China. Some of the distinguishing features of salt production in Yunnan were, for instance, brine wells set up in the midst of rivers, and the manufacture of many different salt forms more or less serving as the distinguishing brand of an individual salt works. Professor Zhu's article has been translated by a group of PhD students and graduate students of the Department of Chinese Studies of Tübingen University, under the guidance, supervision and final approval of the journal's editor-in-chief. The translation not only comprises the article written by Zhu Xia, but also includes the texts which are added as an explanation to each of the nine illustrative sections of the scroll, as well as the colophon. This translation exercise represents a successful example of how teaching can be combined with research in the university curriculum, as it gave German and Chinese students a close insight into the requirements necessary for creating a scholarly English translation.

In his research note, Christopher Cullen discusses the question whether the two key terms 宿 **sukh/xiu* and 舍 **lhah/she*, as they were used in historical Chinese astronomy, should be translated as 'lunar lodges', or just plain 'lodges'. He surveys a representative number of early Chinese texts containing passages in which these two terms occur, elucidating their meaning from a philological point of view. He comes to the conclusion that these two terms seem to be simply equivalent, as no clear patterns in their usage can be detected. However, from the Eastern Han (25-220) onwards, there appears to be a tendency to prefer *she* over *xiu* in technical contexts referring to the heavens. In spite of a lack of clear distinction, nonetheless these two terms can be translated differently, for instance by using 'to abide in' for *she* as a verb and 'abode' for *she* as a noun, while in the case of *xiu* 'to lodge in' or 'lodge' can be chosen. The key point of Cullen's article is, however, that there is no evidence in the early Chinese texts that *xiu* were thought of as constituting a 'graduated scale' geared to lunar motion in particular. This is also borne out by the fact that the 28 *xiu* are grossly unequal in width, making it highly unlikely that the number of *xiu* were chosen on the basis that the moon spent one day of a supposed 28-day cycle in each *xiu*. Hence, Cullen argues, 'lodge' is clearly the proper translation for *xiu*.

Among the book reviews published in this issue we have especially to mention the lengthy review article by Joseph Dauben, which provides a detailed insight into the complex matters treated in Jean-Claude Martzloff's *Le calendrier chinois*, and thus into more than one 1,700 years of Chinese approaches, methods, assumptions, concepts, techniques and computations in calendar making.

I would like to express my gratitude to the contributors, anonymous referees as well as to our EASTM collaborators, that is, the Co-editors, English Language Editor and Managing and Production Editors, for their help in the production of this issue. It is thanks to their efficient and speedy cooperation that this number could be produced just in time for the ISHEASTM conference in Hefei where it will be presented as the first online issue of EASTM.

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ERRATUM:

C. Pierce Salguero, "A Flock of Ghosts Bursting Forth and Scattering": Healing Narratives in a Sixth-Century Chinese Buddhist Hagiography", EASTM 32 (2010), p. 89.

The first sentence, instead of

"As Buddhism was transmitted to China in the **first millennium BC**, texts, doctrines, and narratives concerning Indian models of healing embedded in the Tripitaka were repackaged, reconceptualized, and recreated for Chinese audiences through a sustained project of literary and cultural translation."

should read:

"As Buddhism was transmitted to China in the **first millennium AD**, texts, doctrines, and narratives concerning Indian models of healing embedded in the Tripitaka were repackaged, reconceptualized, and recreated for Chinese audiences through a sustained project of literary and cultural translation."